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CHRISTMAS SONGS AND CAROLS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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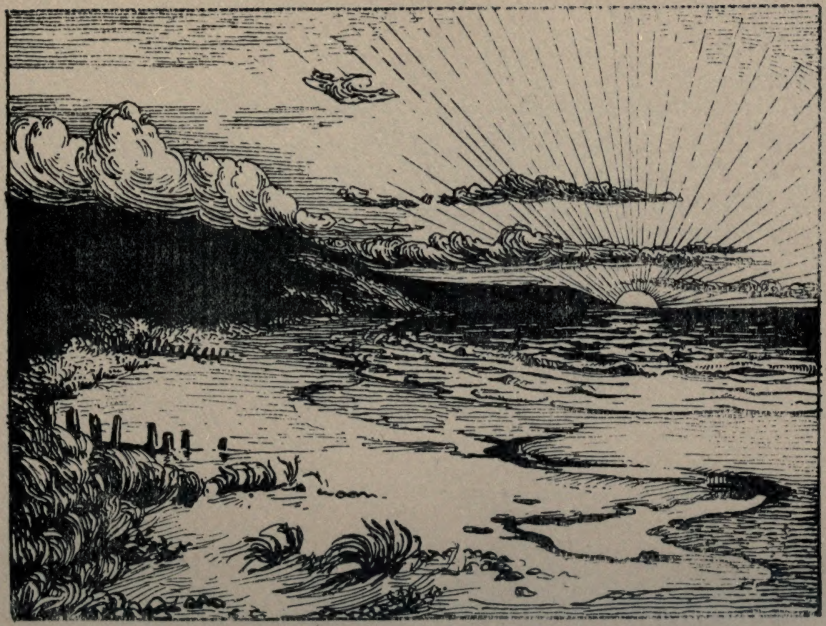
THE ROSEBUD WALL AND OTHER POEMS



GOD OF THE NIGHT AND THE DAWNING!

CHRISTMAS SONGS AND CAROLS BY AGNES H. BEGBIE

Illustrated by Edith Calvert

LONDON: ELKIN MATHEWS
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Our Father

God of the night and the dawning,
  Lord of the white morning star,
God of all gods in the making,
  God of all creatures that are !

God of the pain and the travail,
  Love of the thing that is wrought,
Soul of the toiler and dreamer,
  Joy of the spirit and thought !

God of the mists and the winters,
  Seed of the flower and the root,
Flame of the stars and the sun-rise,
  Splendour of blossom and shoot !

God of the hail and the rainbow,
  Pride of the green thrusting blade,
Song of the bird in the lilacs,
  Love of the man for the maid !

OUR FATHER

Murmur of winds in the branches,
  Delicate laughter of leaves,
God of the plough and the furrows,
  Lord of the reaper and sheaves!

God of the shy, hunted creatures,
  That play where the forest-boughs lean,
God of dim shadows and twilights,
  —Spirit of spirits unseen!

God of the tumult of ocean,
  Sob of its tides on the strand,
Secret of secrets unbroken,
  Maker of shells and of sand!

God of the terrible Silence,
  —Vision of things never taught;
God of swift lightnings and rendings
  —Life of all life that is sought!

God in the simple and humble,
  Heart of the hearts undefiled,
We worship thee, Christ in the world,
  God of the mother and child!

Unto us a Child is Born

While the Angels sang hosannas!
And the stars in glory span,
When the lambs slept on the meadows
Then was born the Son of man:
Sweet, his mother in the shadows
Leant, and sang a lullaby,
While the lambs slept on the meadows,
And the stars watched in the sky.

Unto us a Son is Given

He is come in royal splendour
From above,
Just a little Babe and tender,
—Seeking love.

In soft mother arms she folds him
To her breast,
With caresses sweet she holds him
Her fond guest.

Now she heareth Angels singing
In the night,
She doth see the white Star springing
Of delight.

Fain she bends herself, adoring
Her fair Son.
High she riseth with him, soaring
To the Throne.

UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN

Glory ! glory ! through the Heaven
  Glories ring ;
Unto us a Son is given,
  —Hail the King !

He is come in royal splendour
  From above,
Just a little Babe and tender
  —Bringing love.

The Vision

To the shepherds spake an Angel,
  On the wise men flashed a star,
And they both obeyed the Vision,
  —Rose and followed it afar.

Followed wise men, hastened shepherds
  Where the Star and Angel led,
Till they found a Baby sleeping
  In the covert of a shed.

Low they bowed themselves before Him,
  All their hearts with gladness ran,
—Hailed Him King divine of dreamers,
  Son of God and Son of man!

A STAR IN THE EAST SKY

The Wise Men

A Star in the East Sky!
  Hail to her warning!
Follow her, follow her,
  Sons of the Morning!

The Star of the East Sky
  Beckons, O Masters!
Follow her, follow her,
  Dread not disasters.

Take with ye costly gifts
  —Gifts for High Altar;
Follow her, follow her,
  Doubt not nor falter.

Bring with ye myrrh and gold
  —Gold without measure;
Follow her, follow her,
  Kings with your treasure.

Wisdom is guiding you,
  Fear not to follow,
Follow her, follow her,
  Through stream and hollow.

THE WISE MEN

The Star of the East is
  Star of the stranger,
Follow her, follow her
  Low to a manger.

There, where the Christ lieth,
  Bend and adore Him ;
Spread out your gold and myrrh,
  Masters, before Him.

Gold and frankincense,
  Myrrh sweetly smelling ;
God lit a Star there, to
  Lead to His Dwelling.

Over His Altar High
  Set a lamp swinging.
Laud Him ye Kings and men,
  Joyfully singing !

Star in the dawning East,
  Star of blest warning !
Follow her, follow her,
  Sons of the Morning !

The Return of the Shepherds

" We have seen the Vision splendid
  Angels prophesied,
By a woman's love attended,
  —Praise the Christ ! " they cried.

" Just a Babe, as any other
  God hath glorified,
Shrill His voice rose for His mother,
  —Hail the Christ ! we cried.

" Such a pretty one, beguiling
  Love that none denied,
How He turned to us all smiling,
  —Hail the Christ ! we cried.

" Did ye mark yon light shine o'er Him ?
  God was magnified
When we bent low to adore Him,
  —Hail the Christ ! we cried.

" Deep our souls were stirred with wonder,
  All our doubtings died,
He hath rent the veil asunder,
  —Praise to God ! " they cried.

Emmanuel

Little Child,
In oxen stall,
Art thou God
Who mad'st us all?
Is it truth or only fable
Thou wast born in a stable?
—Thou great God Who mad'st us all!

I have lain
In oxen stall,
Men on earth
My brothers all;
Child of Mary, Son of God,
I have wandered poor, unshod,
—I the God Who loveth all

A Dream of the Virgin

A winged thought entered in my soul,
  Unsought by me it came.
My heart was stirred by the white heat
  Of some divine lit flame.

My soul was swept by the pure wind
  That through God's House is blown;
'Twas filled with the fair melody
  That circles round His Throne.

My spirit bent in ecstacy,
  Then soared in strong delight;
The Gates of Mystery swung wide,
  I woke—and it was night!

The Virgin

A lily soul in His Garden
The Lord saw grew in the shade,
And God, when He searched His Garden,
Stooped to bless Mary the maid!

A LILY SOUL IN HIS GARDEN

The Annunciation

She woke on a still, dim morning,
  All trembling, and shrank dismayed,
For an Angel stirred the dawning,
  With—"Hail! O Mary, the maid

"Unworthy am I," she murmured,
  And wept low, "Sore I'm afraid!"
"Nay, fear not, rejoice!" he answered,
  "God's with thee, Mary the maid!"

Mary the Mother

The little Christ Child was sent by the Lord,
O Mary of Maries to thee!
For thine the Vision of Angel and Word,
And thine the heart that was pierced by a sword,
O Mother of fair Galilee!

O Mary of God, sweet Mother most blest!
The little Son lay on thy knee;
Thine arms a cradle, His pillow thy breast,
Thine eyes the spirits that guarded His rest;
He smiled when He looked up at thee.

O Mary alone, the joy of all years
Was sorrow of sorrows to thee!
Poor Mother, who wrappeth thy love around fears,
Watching thy Son through the mist of thy tears,
—So lonely in far Galilee!

Wherefore

Who are these that come to seek thee,
O my little Baby Son!
—Masters three, with kingly stir,
Bearing gifts of gold and myrrh,
Asking for the Holy One?

Who are these that come to seek thee,
O my little Baby Son!
—Shepherd men and lowly born,
Travel-stained and labour-worn,
Asking for the Holy One?

Wherefore do they come to seek thee,
O my little Baby Son!
What hath led them to thy manger
Over hills and fields of danger,
Asking for the Holy One?

Wherefore do they bow before thee,
Calling thee the Holy One?
Very poor and humble we,
Is there aught for them to see
But a little Baby Son?

A Lullaby

See how the poppies nod,
Baby Boy, Baby Boy !
Saying "Good-night" to God,
Baby Boy, Baby boy.
Nestle down, little King,
Night comes to everything,
Calling to sleep.

Close up these wondering eyes,
Baby Boy, Baby Boy,
Now all the daylight flies,
Baby Boy, Baby Boy.
Hush thee, my little King !
Mother will softly sing
—Sing thee to sleep.

SEE HOW THE POPPIES NOD,
BABY BOY, BABY BOY!

Sucking thy rosy thumb,
  Baby Boy, Baby Boy,
Swiftly the fair dreams come,
  Baby Boy, Baby Boy.
    Hush thee, my little King!
    Dreamy bells dreaming ring
      —Ring thee to sleep.

Head with its golden crest,
  Baby Boy, Baby Boy,
Close to my heart is prest,
  Baby Boy, Baby Boy.
    Hush thee, my little King!
    Gabriel holy bring
      —Bring thee sweet sleep.

Gift of my gracious Lord,
  Baby Boy, Baby Boy,
Crown of my soul—and sword!
  Baby Boy, Baby Boy.
    Hush, hush, my King o' Kings!
    'Tis thy blest mother sings
      —Sings thee to sleep.

A LULLABY

Fears I will cast from me,
  Baby Boy, Baby Boy,
Tears must not fall on thee,
  Baby Boy, Baby Boy.
    Sleep, sleep, my King o' Kings
    Mary thy mother sings
      —Sings thee to sleep.

A Song of Mary

Closely to my heart I hold thee,
O my blessèd Son!
Safe thy mother's arms enfold thee,
—Sleep, my little one!

I will sing to thee, my treasure,
Songs so low and sweet,
Love I lay without a measure
At thy tender feet.

All my soul is bowed with wonder
Whilst my watch I keep,
Thou hast cast its bonds asunder,
—Sleep, my darling, sleep!

Soft, I'll sing thee lullabies,
Jesu', Son and King!
Listening Spirits in the skies
Hear a mother sing!

O great Angels of the Father
Guard His holy Son!
In my woman's arms I gather
Close this little one!

Cup, Crown and Sword

O the Cup and the Crown!
  O the sharp Sword!
Give me strength to kneel down
  My blessèd Lord,
And to take without moan
  Cup, Crown and Sword.

My spirit would give praise,
  Yet sore doth shrink
In glory of my days
  This Cup to drink;
O God, Who sets my ways,
  Bid me not shrink!

CUP, CROWN AND SWORD

Thine handmaid is bowed low
To wear the Crown,
Nothing at all I know
Save Love hath shown;
By mother's bliss and woe
I bear my Crown.

O heart, the sharp-edged Sword
Must pierce, my God!
O Vision and O Word
Of Cross and Rod!
—Must I embrace them, Lord?
—Help me, my God!

O Cup and Crown for me,
And this sharp Sword!
I kneel and cling to Thee
My blessèd Lord:
Give Thou, so Thy Will be,
Cup, Crown and Sword.

The Boy Jesus

Jesus is out in the sunshine,
  Jesus is very glad,
Mary stands by the palm-tree
  Watching the happy lad:
O Mary, mother o' Jesus!
  Why are thine eyes so sad?

Jesus leaps in the sunshine,
  He carols shrill with glee,
Mary heareth him singing,
  She looks out from the tree:
O Mary, mother o' Jesus!
  What do thy deep eyes see?

Jesus runs in the sunshine,
  The palm-tree is his bower,
Mary leans in its shadow,
  He bringeth her a flower:
O Mary, mother o' Jesus!
  Why dost thou weep i' that hour?

NOW, THEY RUN TO KISS EACH OTHER

Little Jesus and His Mother

Mary, at her work all day,
  Watcheth Jesus at his play,
Now, they run to kiss each other
  And the child clings to his mother,
Pleading—"Lovely mother, stay
  Help me with my busy play."

Little Jesus, at his play,
  Seeth his mother weep one day,
Swift his arms rise to smother
  With caress his lovely mother,
Sobbing—"Who hath made thee cry?
  When thou'rt hurt, then so am I."

Kisses chase their tears away,
  And they turn to work and play,
Little Jesus and his mother
  Smile and nod the one to other:
She can make his whole world glad,
  He is still her little lad.

The Child's Question

The little Jesus came weeping,
A brown bird lay in his hand,
"O Mother, I found it sleeping
So cold and stiff in the sand,
D'you think, O Mother, by keeping,
'Twill wake again in my hand?

"This morning, it rose up sailing
And singing close to the sky,
Then sudden, it fell down, trailing
Its wings low, and now they lie:
O Mother!" he said bewailing,
"That little bird flew too high!

"Oh! why is it never singing?
What makes it so cold and numb?
How once did the wings go swinging—
And where did the gladness come?
Tell me, that I may be bringing
A song to its throat grown dumb.

"If my Father made it flying
He could not mean it to fall,
He would grieve to see it lying,
For He loveth things great and small,
Mother, there must not be dying,
—He giveth His life to us all.

"But, maybe, when it rose winging
It lost itself in the blue,
And its song was its own self springing
That passed to the Heavens through,
Where our Father keepeth the singing
Of His birds and Angels, too.

"O Mother, I saw it sailing
And singing close to the sky,
Then sudden, it fell down trailing
Its wings low, and now they lie:
Mother, is its mother wailing
Her little bird flew so high?"

His Mother

"NOW THERE STOOD BY THE CROSS OF JESUS HIS MOTHER."

O Love! that never love denied,
How deep thy soul with sorrows ran!
Thine heart for us was crucified,
Mother o' Christ, mother o' man!

O Life! O Love!

"O Life! O Love!" the Spirit saith,
"Of lordly Life and Love, sing I,
Life, that is never kin to Death,
And durst not deign to die!

"Of thee, most sov'reign Life, I sing,
And Love that is thy very breath,
Love, that is Queen to Life the King,
And hath disdain of Death!

"O Life! upon High Altars laid!
O Love! that lighteth up the whole!
Thy torch that burneth undismayed
Is Life's immortal Soul.

"O Life! I sing" the Spirit saith
"Of thee, and Love that is thy sign,
Thou art the Vanquisher of Death,
Thou art the Christ divine!"

A Christmas Carol

I

Masters, we have travelled far,
To a hearth we'd win,
Lift the latch, undo the bar,
Prithee, take us in!

Cold the wind is on the moor,
Minstrel men are we;
Snow is on the threshing-floor,
Let us warmèd be!

'Tis the birthday of our King,
Minstrels, music make!
Jesu' God, of Him we sing,
Hear us for His sake!

Tune up lutes and violins,
Minstrels, banish sadness,
Jesu' saves us from our sins,
Praise the Christ o' gladness

'TIS THE BIRTHDAY OF OUR KING

Sing with us nor be dismayed,
Gentles, in the Hall,
Sing this night of Mary Maid,
An' Christ o' Bethl'hem Stall.

Play sweet lutes and violins,
Minstrels, banish sadness,
Jesu' saves us from our sins,
Praise the Christ o' gladness!

'Twas this night He came to earth,
Comfort fair to bring;
In a shed had He His birth,
Mary Mother sing!

Play sweet lutes and violins,
Minstrels, banish sadness,
Jesu' saves us from our sins,
Praise the Christ o' gladness!

Whilst glad Seraphs in the skies
Did a Saviour laud,
Mary mild sang lullabies
To the Son of God.

Play sweet lutes and violins,
Minstrels, banish sadness,
Jesu' saves us from our sins,
Praise the Christ o' gladness!

O Mary! Joseph! and Child
That lay on their knee!
In a stable rude and wild,
God did dwell wi' ye.

Play sweet lutes and violins,
Minstrels, banish sadness,
Jesu' saves us from our sins,
Praise the Christ o' gladness!

Sing, sing with joyous measure,
Praise on harpsichord
Him Who brought us gracious treasure,
Jesu', King and Lord.

Play sweet lutes and violins,
Minstrels, banish sadness,
Jesu' saves us from our sins,
Praise the Christ o' gladness

A Christmas Carol

II

Sing glad matins, carols, laud s,
Christ the King is born!
Very Man and God of gods,
Hail this Christmas morn!
Joyful men and women raise
Hearts and voices high with praise!

Father, Mother, Holy Dove,
Flesh for us have worn:
Child of Mary, Son of Love,
Christ the King is born!
Joyful men and women raise
Hearts and voices high with praise!

Jesu' on the blessèd rood
Death for us did scorn;
Pitying God, Eternal Good,
Christ the King is born!
Joyful men and women raise
Hearts and voices high with praise!

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Sing glad matins, carols, lauds,
  Christ the King is born!
Very Man and God of gods,
  Hail this Christmas morn!
    Joyful men and women raise
    Hearts and voices high with praise!

A Christmas Carol

III

O Neighbours, sing with us, be glad!
Music make, sweet music make,
For Jesu' came a little lad,
—Came to earth for Love's dear sake
This Christmas Day!
Then chant each one with his fellows!
Tuneful voices rise and fall,
Play sweet flutes and violincellos,
Praise the Christ o' Bethl'hem Stall!

O Neighbours, sing, make melody!
Join with us a gladsome space,
King Jesu' praise, the One o' Three!
—Our Lord of life, love, and grace,
This Christmas Day!
Then chant each one with his fellows!
Tuneful voices rise and fall,
Play sweet flutes and violincellos,
Praise the Christ o' Bethl'hem Stall!

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

O Neighbours, sing with us, rejoice !
For a Saviour God is He ;
Men and maids, with reverent voice,
Hail the Babe on Mary's knee
This Christmas Day !
Then chant each one with his fellows !
Tuneful voices rise and fall,
Play sweet flutes and violincellos,
Praise the Christ o' Bethl'hem Stall !

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